

Indigenous Digital Archive

The following pages are the original guides by the US National Archives to open federal records that soon will be able to be accessed freely online through the Indigenous Digital Archive, a collaborative interface at <http://native-docs.org>.

The Indigenous Digital Archive is a project of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in collaboration with the State Library Tribal Libraries Program and the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, an organization of all 19 Pueblos of New Mexico.

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RECORDS OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (RECORD GROUP 75)

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, usually known as the Office of Indian Affairs, was established as a separate agency within the War Department in 1824. Congress established the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1832. The Office of Indian Affairs was transferred in 1849 to the newly created Department of the Interior, where it has remained. In 1947 the Office of Indian Affairs was renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

RECORDS OF FIELD JURISDICTIONS

By the time the Office of Indian Affairs was established in 1824, the system of superintendencies and agencies was well organized. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a geographical area, usually a Territory, but sometimes a larger area. Their duties included the supervision of intertribal relationships in their jurisdiction and between the tribes and citizens of the United States or other persons, and the supervision of the conduct and accounts of agents responsible to them. Agents were immediately responsible for the affairs of one or more tribes. They attempted to preserve or restore peace and often tried to induce Indians to cede their lands and to move to areas less threatened by white encroachment. They also distributed money and goods and carried out other provisions of treaties with the Indians. Gradually, as the Indians were confined on reservations, the agents became more concerned with educating and "civilizing" them.

The records maintained by field offices relate to almost all aspects of Indian administration in the field. Records of a superintendency include those of the agencies over which it had jurisdiction. Sometimes records of reservation schools and other field units are included with the agency records. The kinds of records maintained did not vary much from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, although there are great differences in the quantities that have survived. Most of the correspondence of superintendents and independent agents was conducted with the central office of the bureau, but considerable correspondence was exchanged between superintendents and agents within the superintendency. Also found is correspondence with other field officials and employees, Army officers, businessmen, and Indians.

Records of the New Mexico Superintendency, 1849–1880.

T21. 30 rolls.

Letters, 1854–60, written by Christopher (Kit) Carson while he was Indian agent at the Utah Agency are reproduced on roll 1.

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Letters received and other records

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Letters Sent

25	Apr. 4, 1852–Jan. 8, 1856
26	Mar. 29, 1856–Dec. 11, 1859
27	Sept. 8–Nov. 30, 1851, and Jan. 7, 1860–Jan. 26, 1869
28	Nov. 2, 1868–June 30, 1870
29	July 1, 1870–July 7, 1872
30	July 16, 1872–July 24, 1873